



## TALKS FOR GROWING CHRISTIANS TRANSCRIPT

### The Inheritance of the Tribe of Ephraim and Half the Tribe of Manasseh

#### Joshua 16 and 17

**Joshua 16:** *"The lot fell to the children of Joseph from the Jordan, by Jericho, to the waters of Jericho on the east, to the wilderness that goes up from Jericho through the mountains to Bethel, <sup>2</sup> then went out from Bethel to Luz, passed along to the border of the Archites at Ataroth, <sup>3</sup> and went down westward to the boundary of the Japhletites, as far as the boundary of Lower Beth Horon to Gezer; and it ended at the sea.*

<sup>4</sup> *So the children of Joseph, Manasseh and Ephraim, took their inheritance.*

<sup>5</sup> *The border of the children of Ephraim, according to their families, was thus: The border of their inheritance on the east side was Ataroth Addar as far as Upper Beth Horon.*

<sup>6</sup> *And the border went out toward the sea on the north side of Michmethath; then the border went around eastward to Taanath Shiloh, and passed by it on the east of Janohah. <sup>7</sup> Then it went down from Janohah to Ataroth and Naarah, reached to Jericho, and came out at the Jordan.*

<sup>8</sup> *The border went out from Tappuah westward to the Brook Kanah, and it ended at the sea. This was the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Ephraim according to their families. <sup>9</sup> The separate cities for the children of Ephraim were among the inheritance of the children of Manasseh, all the cities with their villages.*

<sup>10</sup> *And they did not drive out the Canaanites who dwelt in Gezer; but the Canaanites dwell among the Ephraimites to this day and have become forced laborers.*

#### Background Notes for Joshua 16

The "children of Joseph" (v1) were the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh. There was no "tribe of Joseph" in Israel, because Joseph received his blessing in the land through his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. In fact, through his two sons, Joseph received a double portion in the land! This was one aspect of the birthright that God transferred from Reuben, Jacob's oldest son, to Joseph: *"...Reuben the firstborn of Israel—he was indeed the firstborn, but because he defiled his father's bed, his birthright was given to the sons of Joseph, the son of Israel, so that the genealogy is not listed according to the birthright..."* (1 Chronicles 5:1).

Ephraim and Manasseh received the largest and best territory in the heart of the Land, as we see in Joshua 16 and 17. This land was fertile and beautiful -- you can see this even today. In Joshua 13 one half of the tribe of Manasseh received a good chunk of land on the east side of the Jordan River. In Joshua 16 and 17, the other half of Manasseh and the tribe of Ephraim received their territories on the west side of the Jordan River. In Joshua 16:6, notice that the town of Shiloh was included in Ephraim's territory. Shiloh would be the location of the Tabernacle for more than three hundred years.

**Joshua 17:** *"There was also a lot for the tribe of Manasseh, for he was the firstborn of Joseph: namely for Machir the firstborn of Manasseh, the father of Gilead, because he was a man of war; therefore he was given Gilead and Bashan.<sup>2</sup> And there was a lot for the rest of the children of Manasseh according to their families: for the children of Abiezer the children of Helek, the children of Asriel, the children of Shechem, the children of Hopher, and the children of Shemida; these were the male children of Manasseh the son of Joseph according to their families.<sup>3</sup> But Zelophehad the son of Hopher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, had no sons, but only daughters. And these are the names of his daughters: Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah.<sup>4</sup> And they came near before Eleazar the priest, before Joshua the son of Nun, and before the rulers, saying, "The LORD commanded Moses to give us an inheritance among our brothers." Therefore, according to the commandment of the LORD, he gave them an inheritance among their father's brothers.<sup>5</sup> Ten shares fell to Manasseh, besides the land of Gilead and Bashan, which were on the other side of the Jordan,<sup>6</sup> because the daughters of Manasseh received an inheritance among his sons; and the rest of Manasseh's sons had the land of Gilead.<sup>7</sup> And the territory of Manasseh was from Asher to Michmethath, that lies east of Shechem; and the border went along south to the inhabitants of En Tappuah.<sup>8</sup> Manasseh had the land of Tappuah, but Tappuah on the border of Manasseh belonged to the children of Ephraim.<sup>9</sup> And the border descended to the Brook Kanah, southward to the brook. These cities of Ephraim are among the cities of Manasseh. The border of Manasseh was on the north side of the brook; and it ended at the sea.<sup>10</sup> Southward it was Ephraim's, northward it was Manasseh's, and the sea was its border. Manasseh's territory was adjoining Asher on the north and Issachar on the east.<sup>11</sup> And in Issachar and in Asher, Manasseh had Beth Shean and its towns, Ibleam and its towns, the inhabitants of Dor and its towns, the inhabitants of En Dor and its towns, the inhabitants of Taanach and its towns, and the inhabitants of Megiddo and its towns—three hilly regions.<sup>12</sup> Yet the children of Manasseh could not drive out the inhabitants of those cities, but the Canaanites were determined to dwell in that land.<sup>13</sup> And it happened, when the children of Israel grew strong, that*

*they put the Canaanites to forced labor, but did not utterly drive them out.*

*<sup>14</sup> Then the children of Joseph spoke to Joshua, saying, "Why have you given us only one lot and one share to inherit, since we are a great people, inasmuch as the LORD has blessed us until now?"*

*<sup>15</sup> So Joshua answered them, "If you are a great people, then go up to the forest country and clear a place for yourself there in the land of the Perizzites and the giants, since the mountains of Ephraim are too confined for you."*

*<sup>16</sup> But the children of Joseph said, "The mountain country is not enough for us; and all the Canaanites who dwell in the land of the valley have chariots of iron, both those who are of Beth Shean and its towns and those who are of the Valley of Jezreel."*

*<sup>17</sup> And Joshua spoke to the house of Joseph—to Ephraim and Manasseh—saying, "You are a great people and have great power; you shall not have only one lot,<sup>18</sup> but the mountain country shall be yours. Although it is wooded, you shall cut it down, and its farthest extent shall be yours; for you shall drive out the Canaanites, though they have iron chariots and are strong."*

## **Background notes for Joshua 17**

In Joshua 17:1-13 we have the territory of the half tribe of Manasseh on the west side of the Jordan River. From verse 14 to the end of the chapter, we have the request of both Ephraim and Manasseh for more land.

Verses 3-4 tell us the about Zelophehad and his five daughters. In Numbers 27, we read that Zelophehad had five daughters, but no sons. His daughters came to Moses and requested that they should receive the inheritance of their father that would normally go to sons. Moses didn't say at that point, "Well, I'm sorry ladies, we've never done it this way before. Tradition is that women don't count when land is given out! It's a man's world -- women are but mere chattel." No! Moses brought their request before the Lord, and here's what the Lord said: *"The daughters of Zelophehad speak what is right; you shall surely give them a possession of inheritance among their father's brothers, and cause the inheritance of their father to pass to them"* (Numbers 27:7). God does not place men on a higher level than women!

## **Doctrinal / Teaching Points**

### **1. God is more pleased with territory gained than with tribute given.**

Verse 10: *"And they did not drive out the Canaanites who dwelt in Gezer; but the Canaanites dwell among the Ephraimites to this day and have become forced laborers."* In our studies of Joshua we've seen that the physical land of Canaan, where Israel would receive the blessings but also fight the battles, represents or

pictures the spiritual land of spiritual blessings and spiritual battles in the Christian life. The enemies in the land represent forms of spiritual opposition that Satan uses to keep us from fully following the Lord.

God wanted the tribe of Ephraim to completely drive out the Canaanites who were living in their allotment of the Land, but Ephraim failed to drive them out. Ephraim did succeed in making the Canaanites pay tribute and putting them to work. Some of that work and tribute may have gone to the service of the Lord (maybe even into the tabernacle at Shiloh) -- but **God is more pleased with territory gained than with tribute given.**

There's a lesson here for us. Some Christians today are really into making money. The love of money motivates them -- it's their number one priority. As a result of making more money, they are able to give more money (or pay tribute) to the Lord. But -- love for the Lord is not their number one priority. Money is! God is pleased when we gain territory in the spiritual Land that He has given us. He's a lot less pleased to receive financial "tribute" while enemies like the "love of money" are still left in our portion of the Land. God is more pleased with territory gained than with tribute given.

## **2. God is more pleased with "faith walkers" than with "faith talkers."**

Verse 14: *"Then the children of Joseph spoke to Joshua, saying, "Why have you given us only one lot and one share to inherit, since we are a great people, inasmuch as the LORD has blessed us until now?"* Notice that the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh didn't deny that the Lord had blessed them. In fact, they probably recounted a number of ways in which the Lord had blessed them. But former victories and blessings are not power for today.

Ephraim and Manasseh were good "faith talkers." They were like a lot of Christians today who can give you a great testimony about how the Lord has saved them and given them great blessings in the past -- but what about the present? Ephraim and Manasseh were great faith talkers, but Ephraim and Manasseh were not great faith walkers. They wanted more territory and more blessing -- but they didn't want to work for it or fight for it. What a contrast to Caleb in Joshua 14!

Joshua told Ephraim and Manasseh: *"If you are a great people, then go up to the forest country and clear a place for yourself there in the land of the Perizzites and the giants, since the mountains of Ephraim are too confined for you" (v15).* But Ephraim and Manasseh were too lazy to work and too afraid to fight. *"But the children of Joseph said, "The mountain country is not enough for us; and all the*

*Canaanites who dwell in the land of the valley have chariots of iron, both those who are of Beth Shean and its towns and those who are of the Valley of Jezreel" (v16).* Ephraim and Manasseh were not willing to step out in faith and fight for the land. They were faith talkers, but not faith walkers.

There are a lot of Christians in this category today. They "talk the faith" very well. They **say** they want God to give them more spiritual land -- but they don't really want to "walk the faith." They want the blessings without the work! They **say** that they want to get into the Word more -- and serve the Lord more --and pray more -- but it's all **talk!** They're actually lazy and afraid. They spend far more time watching TV than reading or studying the Bible or memorizing Scripture, and they're afraid to witness even to their next-door neighbor or their close colleague at work -- and yet they think and talk as if they're great and strong Christians.

Are you in that category? Remember -- God is more pleased with faith walkers than with faith talkers.

## **Practical Applications**

### **1. Will it be said in heaven that you could not, or that you would not?**

In reference to the tribe of Ephraim, Joshua 16:19 says, "*And they did not drive out the Canaanites who dwelt in Gezer...*" Now go back to the Joshua 15:63: "*As for the Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the children of Judah could not drive them out...*" Did you notice the slight difference in the two verses, the difference between Ephraim and Judah? Judah **could** not drive out the Jebusites – but Ephraim **did** not drive out the Canaanites!

In the case of Judah, the problem was a lack of faith. If they had trusted the Lord, He would have given them the strength to drive out the Jebusites. In the case of Ephraim, it seems that the main problem was lack of will. They didn't want to drive out the Canaanites! They preferred to receive tribute from them, and they preferred to gain the material benefits of forcing the Canaanites to work for them!

We see the same thing in the case of the tribe of Manasseh. Joshua 17:12-13 - "*Yet the children of Manasseh could not drive out the inhabitants of those cities, but the Canaanites were determined to dwell in that land.* <sup>13</sup> *And it happened, when the children of Israel grew strong, that they put the Canaanites to forced labor, but did not utterly drive them out.*" At first Manasseh **could** not drive them out, but when the tribe became stronger and could have driven them out, they didn't drive them

out! They preferred to co-exist with the enemy -- if they could get some material benefit out of that relationship. What a mistake!

There's an application for Christians here. Is it possible that you're willing to live your life, co-existing with some kind of sin, or getting some kind of material benefit from the enemy? Don't be a worldly Christian. Will it be said in heaven that you **could** not or that you **would** not?

## 2. The ball is in your court!

You've heard that expression before, right? It means that responsibility and challenge has been directed your way. Now -- what are you going to do with it? That's essentially what Joshua told Ephraim and Manasseh – the ball is in your court!

Look at Joshua's challenge in verses 17-18: *"And Joshua spoke to the house of Joseph—to Ephraim and Manasseh—saying, "You are a great people and have great power; you shall not have only one lot, but the mountain country shall be yours. Although it is wooded, you shall cut it down, and its farthest extent shall be yours; for you shall drive out the Canaanites, though they have iron chariots and are strong."*

In essence Joshua said, "Ephraim and Manasseh, if you claim that you're a great people and want more farmland, you can have it -- but you'll have to work for it! You'll have to fight for it! The land is right there for the taking. It's in your territory. It's true that there is "no gain without pain" – but you can do it, Ephraim and Manasseh! Cut down the forest (even though it's a lot of hard work), and drive out the Canaanites (even though they have iron chariots and you'll have to fight)! You can do it. The ball is in your court!"

What a challenge for us as believers! The ball is in your court! Do you want more blessing in your life? Do you want to become a more mature believer? You say that you're a spiritual Christian and you want more? Then go for it! The ball is in your court.

You may have to cut down some "trees" that mar your vision and or clear a "forest that blocks your progress. You may have to clean out some "dead wood" in your life. You will have to get more involved in spiritual warfare, and the enemy forces are strong and powerful -- but **you can do it!** The Lord is on our side, so go for it! The ball is in your court!